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FACTS ABOUT PHOENIX HOMESTEADS

Department of Agriculture
Farm Security Administration

NAME OF PROJECT: Phoenix Homesteads

LOCATION: In Maricopa County, Arizona, approximately three miles northeast of the city of Phoenix.

NUMBER OF UNITS: Twenty five houses, each with chicken house and combination garage and wash shed.

HISTORY OF PROJECT: Initiated by the Division of Subsistence Homesteads of the Department of the Interior, the Phoenix Homesteads project was completed by the Resettlement Administration on September 7, 1935.

PURPOSE OF PROJECT: In the development of this project, a number of objectives were considered. A primary purpose was to provide housing facilities for low-income families employed on full or part-time basis in the agricultural processing plants in the vicinity of the project, on large scale truck and fruit gardens and in the mines, shops and other industrial enterprises in and near Phoenix. Consideration was also given to providing supplementary income to health-seekers and war veterans retired on small pensions. In general, it was sought to provide healthful living conditions and an opportunity to increase the real income of the workers by home production of a large part of their foodstuffs. The incomes of the residents ranged between $600 and $1200, with the average income about $1000 a year.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The land selected for the project site was a 75-acre tract of sloping, well-drained land, with soil suitable for the growing of common vegetables, cotton, berries and citrus fruits. In addition, to 25 dwellings, built on tracts of less than one acre each, chicken houses and combination garages and wash sheds have been constructed. Each house has its own garden plot and at the back of the project there has been reserved a 50-acre tract that will be used as a cooperative pasture and grazing area. Water is furnished through a project constructed system by the city of Phoenix. Individual septic tanks provide for the disposal of sewage. Electricity is available from the Salt River Valley Water Users Association at a flat family charge and, when proper connections have been made, gas will be available to project residents.

HOUSE DESCRIPTION: The houses are one-story structures with adobe brick walls, finished in stucco and with stone slab roofs. There are no basements and the houses are heated by fireplaces located in the living rooms. Five houses are of three rooms in size and 20 houses are of four rooms.

THE HOMESTEADERS: The residents are a group of comparatively young people having moderate incomes, simple tastes and thrifty habits. The wage earners, although regularly employed in urban occupations, usually come from farm families and are competent gardeners. Before taking residence here, some were mine and agricultural workers who had moved to the city in hope of finding new opportunity. About one-third of the family heads are office workers, one-third are engaged in service occupations and one-third are skilled craftsmen. All the members of the community are white and, with the exception of three, all are native Americans. The three foreign-born, however, are United States citizens.

All families living at the Phoenix Homesteads were residents of the area surrounding the project, but only a few were born in Arizona. Several were brought to the state at an early age by pioneering or health-seeking parents. The families are all in good health and are regularly employed.